

*Copy under Sprague - computer stuff*

2/3/70

Dear Bud,

This morning's Washington Post story on Sprague's gimick and your association, especially financial, fill me with dismay.

There is a phrase of the computer trade I have heard as "Gigo", short for "garbage in, garbage out", a less polite formulation of the concept that the computer can put out only what can come from what is put in.

Sprague, aside from temperamental disqualifications (which has nothing to do with whether or not he is a very nice and deeply concerned guy, which he is), is so completely lacking in both knowledge and judgement as to be unable to feed the computers. What, then, can emerge except another gimick and, I specifically predict without qualification, to make a record upon which I shall certainly stand, another destruction of our credibility?

Let us take the Frenchy pictures. Now you tell me what he is going to feed about them. The offals about where and when the men were "arrested", when he has nothing but wishful thinking and an ignored but existing photographic disqualification of the entire already-disaster he has wrought with it through Garrison? When he would pay no attention to reason and provided contrivances responding to nothing about this, I dropped it. But there is nothing he has said about this that is even tenable and much that is contrary to what he cites. What he cites is at best gnat-straining. Or, which of his different versions of these pictures will go into the machines? Or his different identifications of the same men, all specific, all unequivocal, all ardently pressed in their day as unquestionable and established beyond doubt, and all but the final version, whatever that may by now be, abandoned and regarded as though they never existed?

If the machines are to prove the puffs of smoke prove firing (and this, naturally, includes to the elimination of all possibilities other than this), where does he get the knowledge, especially the ballistics knowledge, or what weapons under what conditions and with what ammunition can a) produce such puffs of smoke and b) what alternative explanations there may be?

What in the hell would 50 men at the scene be doing? And did you ever hear of so many men all preserving their silence so completely, remaining undetected-any one of them-so long? What kind of insanity conceives of the need for anything like this army at the scene? Before this story appeared, I was questioned by radio press about this and was able to avoid this aspect on the air by restricting myself to fulsome praise for the fine job Dick has done of finding the pictures and the importance of this thing alone.

What makes it so much worse is that, unless you have all suddenly acquired basic knowledge you did not have or have added qualified experts with the requisite knowledge, none of whom are known to me to exist, all of you combined, assuming the improbable, that you can all agree on the fact to be fed the machines, do not have the basic knowledge to feed it. To cite but a single area, on the results of this shooting by how many of the fifty you and/or the machines were firing and from where and with what. To take but a single aspect of this, with what kinds of weapons (the effects of all differing so greatly) and with what kinds, sizes and velocities of bullets, where the variations in results are even greater.

In the interest of your personal integrity and reputation, which I would like to preserve for you as a friend, as well as in the increasingly-difficult survival problem we face from endless gimmickry and constant failure to even explore contrary beliefs, the most painful example of which we have in Garrison, I make you an offer and a promise. I will take time from what could be put to constructive work to devil's advocate the input and, when this is not done, I will utterly and completely destroy the final product, too late to save us this added and needless and so wasteful disaster without benefit of computer, with what the computer has not yet been able to eliminate.

I get even sicker when I think of the useful purposes to which this sum could be put and the minor expenses for the repayment of which no funds were available, like phone calls.

I would be delighted at any possibility of any solution of the crime. But will you please tell me or quote to me what Sprague told you he knows of the crimes itself? Of course, he knows the President was killed and Connally was wounded. But I defy you, individually or collectively, to give me an unequivocal explanation of what killed Kennedy, to the exclusion of all other possibilities, what wounds he had, to the exclusion of all other possibilities, what wounds Connally had, to the exclusion of all other possibilities, what inflicted them, to the exclusion of all other possibilities (how and from what directions and angles), a description of all the wounds to the exclusion of all other possibilities, and what shots of what kind from what weapons striking where were fired? If you cannot do this, pray tell me what you will feed into the machines?

And this, I hope you can see, is but one aspect.

If you read Sprague's "Did These Men Assassinate President Kennedy", you either did not check it out or did it on the basis of entirely inadequate knowledge, for it is entirely untenable. Is this the way to feed a computer and get a meaningful output? And this is the best thing Dick has done. How dependable the most elemental aspects of his work and raw materials are you probably forgot, but I remind you of our wasted trip to the Library of Congress, where he had studied what I turned over to him, that NBC footage. He could not even make an accurate citation to it. Feed this into the computers, and permit your/our reputations to be measured by it?

If you doubt the foregoing is but a small part of what you now face, just ask for more. It is, without doubt, abundant. This is but some of what comes to mind the very moment I read the Post story. I have dropped what I was doing to get this written so I can give it to Paul to hand you tomorrow, for I would protect you, alas, also from yourself. If I am asked anything further about this, I will continue to fend off anything that can be interpreted as criticism, but it will gall me to do it.

And Christ how I hate to live in such abject poverty, with viable works that cannot be printed, when there is lavish financing available for shit! I have offered so many times, as recently as Skolnick, to consult with you and, where I can, to guide you, for I have been in this longer and more intensively than you and learned what it has been impossible for you to have learned. Surely it is unselfish of me to want to do this or take the time for it. There is no possibility of gain for me. I have not, for example, asked you for the funds you are giving Dick. Why not take the most elemental precautions? Can we not have learned anything from the Garrison fiasco? Or, can we survive perpetuating the same, lemming-like mistakes? Please, Bud, waste my time and save yourself, if not your money. If this thing ever comes out, you will be a laughingstock. And the object of ridicule, pity or both of those who know the fact. Regretfully,